



Project Description:

The Maryland African American Museum Corporation (the “Museum” and “MAAMC”) was created by the State of Maryland during the 1998 General Assembly as a public instrumentality and an independent unit of the Executive branch of State government. The Museum represents a significant investment that was initiated by the State to honor and share its world-renowned and diverse African American heritage through education, preservation and tourism.

Under the design direction of the award-winning joint venture, the Freelon Group and RTKL and with project and construction management provided by the Department of General Services (“DGS”), the Museum has already received a design award. **The museum broke ground on December 3, 2002, is under construction and will be completed in July 2004. Staff is expected to move into the building in September 2004, with opening festivities to take place in December 2004.**

Funds for planning, design and construction have been provided since FY 1995. Grants for operations have been provided since FY 2000. The City of Baltimore granted a 98-year, \$1 per year lease to the Museum in December 2000. The Museum has met its \$3 million private capital match, has demonstrated its 33⅓% match for its FY 2002, FY 2003, and FY 2004 operating budgets and has established an endowment to ensure the Museum’s long-term financial stability.

Sustainability. From its inception, the state envisioned the Museum to be a public-private partnership. With the legislation enacting the Corporation in 1998, the State of Maryland granted \$31 million (in state revenue bonds) to the Museum for facility construction, to be matched with a minimum of \$3 million in capital contributions raised through the private funds. In addition, the state made a commitment to provide significant long-term support for the Museum’s projected annual operating budget of \$3 million. The state funds 75% of the Museum’s operating budget through its first two years of operation. State funding is reduced to 50% thereafter.

The Museum leadership has met the State of Maryland’s threshold requirements by raising \$3 million towards facility construction and meeting its operating match since its inception. In addition, various state agencies give the Museum important technical, administrative, fiscal, legal, and personnel support. Equally committed to this undertaking, the City of Baltimore donated the land on which the Museum will be located for a 98-year, \$1 per year lease. Upon being designated a Smithsonian Affiliate, the Museum also gained access to priceless collections, programs, membership and other benefits that it extends to its charter members.

To plan realistically for its needs, the Museum commissioned studies of its tour and travel market and financial environment. Economic Research Associates and The London Group reviewed the proposed Museum program, and surveyed comparable African American museums and Baltimore museums to understand their market dynamics and other characteristics. With advice and guidance from many museum professionals, the Museum carried out surveys, telephone and in-person interviews, and held focus groups to identify its potential market and the sources of its revenue streams. Projections call for the Museum to attract an audience of nearly 300,000 people in its first year of operation, and, conservatively, nearly 150,000 annually thereafter. Revenue forecasts were made on the amount and type of support that the Museum needs to complement the major annual operating funding from the state.

✓ **To ensure strong visitation and patronage, the Museum will offer changing exhibitions and exciting educational and public programs to attract a diverse audience and encourage repeat visitation.**

✓ **State support will be complemented by a strong, diverse revenue mix consisting of: admissions, memberships, annual fund contributions, endowment income, donor societies, fundraising events, facility rentals, corporate memberships, sponsorships, public and private grants, planned giving, and proceeds from the Museum shop and café operations.**

Education. With education as a major focus, the Museum has entered into an unprecedented partnership to develop curriculum, resource materials and training opportunities for teachers. This partnership will impact the learning of 850,000 students, the professional development of 50,000 teachers, and will support MSDE's five year goal to close the achievement gap of minority students. State Superintendent of Schools' Dr. Nancy Grasmick appointed an Education Task Force to oversee this initiative in 2001. The Task Force has solicited input from teachers and administrators to assess expectations and needs in the classroom, met with the museum's building and exhibit design teams to design, and plan for teachable moments within the museum, and researched other museum/school initiatives that are working successfully around the nation.

The end of 2003 signaled the productive close of the first phase of work to deliver *An African American Journey: A Resource for Learning the History of African Americans in Maryland and the United States* to Maryland's Superintendent of Schools before an audience of the state's educational leadership and on December 17, 2003. The culmination of more than two years of planning, writing and revision, the Museum/MSDE Partnership's Education Task Force developed eighty lessons for a statewide elementary and middle school "curriculum" in African American history. A second phase of review by an expert panel has just been completed in February 2004. A Teacher Training Institute is scheduled in July 2004. A pilot phase of use by 120 teachers in select classrooms statewide this Fall/Winter 2004-2005 will precede the release of the complete curriculum in Spring 2005.

Permanent Exhibit: At the heart of its facility, mission and programs is the Museum's Permanent Exhibit. Occupying an 11,500 square-foot gallery on the Museum's third floor, this permanent installation features more than 250 objects and images including manuscripts, photographs, fine and folk art, documents, and memorabilia of material culture. The exhibit explores the history and the diversity of the African American experience through individual histories, faith-based and community organizations, historical events and popular culture. The permanent exhibit **tells the many journeys toward freedom and self-determination made by Maryland's African Americans, journeys that have inspired America to be a flagship for democracy and opportunity around the world.**

The nationally renowned firm Randi Korn and Associates conducted extensive audience research to uncover potential visitors' reactions to the planned exhibit. The study found that:

"Overwhelmingly the [exhibit was] well-received. Interviewees...noted that such a museum focused on African American history is long overdue... and enjoyed reading the stories...They were surprised when they learned something new...Personal connections were plentiful...Most interviewees, regardless of race, found ways to connect to the stories and histories."ⁱ

Special Exhibitions and Programs. To complement the permanent exhibit and encourage repeat visitation and strong community support, the Museum is developing an **outstanding and unparalleled arts and cultural program**. Using the arts and culture, the Museum will reinforce its seriousness of purpose, its scholarship and its creativity to share with the world the many amazing and powerful artistic contributions that peoples of the African Diaspora have given to the world.

The Museum is also in the process of developing excellent arts and cultural programs by and about African Americans and the African Diaspora to be brought to children and adults on a consistent basis throughout the year. The arts and cultural program will partner with local, national and even international arts institutions, artists and leaders to provide broad exposure of the diversity of outstanding arts and culture. Programs will include **special exhibition development, public programs, performances, artists in residence, fellowships and internships, and publications.**

Community Partnerships. In addition to the Museum's Exhibitions and Educational Initiative, the Museum is actively engaged in developing partnerships with a variety of different constituents. Collaboration and inclusiveness are extremely important. Such partnerships include:

Heritage Walk— a collaboration of over 34 museums and historic sites to create a heritage destination **modeled after Boston's Freedom Trail.**

ⁱ Maryland Museum of African American History & Culture, Visitor Responses to Interpretive Strategies, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc., June 2002.

Consortium of African and African American Museums in Maryland (“CAAAMM”) – a consortium of African and African American museums in Maryland currently partnering to create a **collaborative state-wide traveling exhibit**.

The **McKim Community Center and Pleasant View Gardens Boys and Girls Club** – to continue our annual Children’s Day to establish substantive community relationships with the Museum and provide **enhanced cultural and educational exposure** and opportunities to children.

FY2005 Operating Budget Grant Request:

The Museum is requesting \$2,165,366 to support 75% of its proposed FY 2005 \$2,887,155 operating budget.

Issue #1

State Support of the Maryland African American Museum Corporation Should be Codified: In order to establish the State's financial commitment to the Maryland African American Museum Corporation and define the parameters under which the State's grant is provided, the Department of Legislative Services recommends that the legislature consider codifying the level of operating support the State is willing to provide as opposed to executing a memorandum of understanding on an annual basis.

Budget Analyst's Recommended Action: Concur with Governor's allowance.

Museum's Recommended Action: The Museum concurs.